

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: November 14, 2013

Agenda Item: Addition to Pine Grove Pond Fishing Access Site

Division: Fisheries

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background

On June 5, 2013, the Fish and Wildlife Commission endorsed FWP's request to pursue acquisition through donation of a 5.39 acre parcel that adjoins the 13-acre Pine Grove Pond FAS and would provide access to the Whitefish River. Pine Grove Pond FAS, located near Kalispell, is a popular family fishing pond with approximately 30,000 visitor days each year. The Whitefish Credit Union owns a narrow strip of land that is located between the Pine Grove Pond FAS and the Whitefish River with 1,800 feet of river bank. The parcel is a part of a larger piece of property that the credit union intends to sell. The credit union offered to donate the 5.39 acre parcel to FWP. FWP is now seeking the commission's approval to finalize this acquisition.

Public Involvement Process & Results

FWP conducted an environmental review and received comments from 10 individuals. All comments were in favor of the acquisition as adding to a popular FAS. One comment noted this would improve floating access to the Whitefish River. The adjacent landowner, who donated the original fishing access site, identified the property and persuaded the credit union to donate the property.

Alternatives and Analysis

The proposal calls for the commission to approve acquiring this property, which would provide additional public access to the Whitefish River for angling and floating. Alternatively, the commission could deny the request to finalize the acquisition of this parcel. If the donation is not accepted by FWP, the property would likely be sold with the larger remaining parcel. It is unknown whether another owner would allow public access to the Whitefish River from the fishing access site.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends that the commission authorize FWP to accept this parcel through a donation by the Whitefish Credit Union. The public would gain a new opportunity to access the Whitefish River from an already popular fishing access site for floating and fishing. Acquisition of this parcel would allow weed control to complement the weed management on the fishing access site.

Proposed Motion

I move that the commission authorize FWP to accept the Whitefish Credit Union's offer to donate a parcel of land adjoining the Pine Grove Pond FAS.